

Fort Mifflin, Artillery Shed
Mud Island
Marine and Penrose Ferry Road
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1225-B

HABS
PA

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. PA-1225 B

FORT MIFFLIN ARTILLERY SHED

Location: Near the demibastion of the southeast scarp of Fort Mifflin, Mud Island, Marine and Penrose Ferry Roads, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: City of Philadelphia.

Present Use: Historic site museum.

Significance: Built in 1837, the artillery shed was used for the storage and protection of cannon on an interior raised platform.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A report from the Engineer Department in Philadelphia dated November 28, 1837, stated that "During the present year a gun-shed has been erected." (ASP 7:580). On Belin's 1839 plans and drawings, the artillery shed appears with an open facade, nine bays delineated by columns, with a raised platform on the interior (CGM #71). This facade was enclosed in the 1930s. For additional information, see Fort Mifflin History (PA-1225).

Prepared by Alison K. Hoagland
Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
Fall, 1979.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Despite the later enclosure of the front facade, the grandeur of the stone colonnade is still apparent.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair. As the building has lost its roof, the exposed roof structure and platform framing and flooring are deteriorating.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This one-story structure is nine bays wide, 97', by 36'-9".
2. Foundations: An approximately 2' wide, uncoursed rubble stone foundation extends approximately 14" to 20" above grade and protrudes 5" under the brick masonry walling of the southwest, northwest, and southeast elevations.
3. Wall construction, finish and color:
The front, northeast elevation is characterized by monolithic gneiss stone, 12" square section columns supporting a 12" x 18" section gneiss lintel. Each column is set on a continuous rubble stone foundation which is capped with concrete. The 1'-1" thick, red brick walling of the other three elevations is laid in common bond, with a header course every ninth course.
4. Structural system: The brick bearing walls and the stone lintel carry 3" x 9 1/2" joists, 2'-0" on center, which are tied into a rafter plate and 3" x 5 1/2" rafters, 2'-0" on center.
5. Porches: Across the northeast elevation the shed roof of a porch is supported on 7 1/2" square wood columns set on 14" cube gneiss bases also set on a rubble stone foundation. The porch was enclosed in the 1930s with vertical boarding and is covered with tar paper.
6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys rise behind the eave of the southwest elevation. The stacks, which are supported on corbeling below the roof line, have two-course corbeled caps.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors:

Originally the northeast elevation had nine open bays between the gneiss columns.

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At present, there are two modern doors, one in each end bay of the porch enclosure.

- b. Windows and shutters: The four-bay southwest rear elevation and the one-bay end elevations have strap iron lintels over the masonry openings, which do not have arches, and double hung sash having fragments of muntins for six-over-six lights. The narrow window frames, with quarter round molding, are set with plain wood sills and are untrimmed on the interior. There are no shutters. Double hung sash with fragments of muntins for six-over-six-light glazing fill the window openings of the seven central bays of the porch enclosure. Plain boards trim the porch openings which have head drip boards. All the openings are closed with plywood.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: The hipped roof is scantily covered with remnants of wood shingles which are applied over roofing lath.
- b. Cornice and eaves: Original outlookers, which were mortised or notched into the main roof structure, have deteriorated and been replaced by nailed blocking to provide support for a boxed cornice with modern moldings. At the porch a similar cornice extends onto the end elevation with returns. Remnants of gutters remain at the eaves, though no leaders or downspouts exist.

A white marble splash block at the east corner of the porch may be original.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The interior is a single space divided by the columns of the platform.
2. Stairways: Wood stairways, without railings and with closed stringers, rise at each end to the platform level.
3. Flooring: The floor of the shed and the porch is paved with brick laid in a herringbone pattern.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The fabric of the structure is exposed, although the brick walling is painted white over an earlier yellow wash.
5. Special features: Extending the length of the building, the 7'-10" high platform which is 14'-9" wide is supported on chamfered 11 1/2" square columns and 12" square beams set in nine bays and on either side of the end stairways. Diagonal braces extend from the columns to the beams which carry 3" x 12" floor joists and two inch thick flooring planks. The platform overhang is boxed and trimmed with a beaded scotia. An 8'-10" x 8'-11" open hoistway is located in the center of the platform and is flanked by a 8" x 10" hoist support on each side which extend to the joists of the roof structure. Typically, the platform is of mortise and tenon construction with pegged joints.
6. Mechanical equipment: There is no heating or lighting; however, the two chimneys originally provided for stoves.

Prepared by Rodd L. Wheaton
Architect
Historic American Buildings
Survey
Spring, 1974.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Fort Mifflin projects of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) were carried out during the summers of 1969 and 1970 with grants from the Haas Community Funds in cooperation with the Philadelphia Historical Commission, the Independence National Historical Park, and the Shackamaxon Society, Inc. The projects were under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief, HABS. The 1969 survey team was supervised by R. Michael Schneider (Texas A & M University) with student assistant architects Allan H. Steenhusen (Iowa State University), Bruce V.A. Bonacher (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), and Malcolm Heard, Jr. (Tulane University). The 1970 survey team was supervised by Allan H. Steenhusen (Iowa State University) with architect Ronald B. Tjerandsen (University of Washington) and student assistant architect John T. Shumate (Carnegie-Mellon University). The drawings were completed in 1971 by HABS architect Allan H. Steenhusen and student assistant architect Tim Wolosz (University of Cincinnati). The drawings were edited in 1972-73 under the direction of John C. Poppeliers, Chief, HABS, by HABS architects Rodd L. Wheaton and John A. Burns with student assistant architect K. Barry Peckham (University of Cincinnati). Historian for the project was A.C. (Gus) Hamblett until 1972. The data was then edited by several members of the HABS staff, including Rodd L. Wheaton, John A. Burns, and Philip Hamp, and completed by Alison K. Hoagland in 1979.